

I am writing this statement in support of the Bill # 4698 authored by Representative Scott Dianda currently before the State of Michigan for consideration. As a Veterans' Service Officer I wholeheartedly support the passage of this bill.

It is my understanding that there are at least two other bills in consideration that closely resemble Representative Dianda's bill, however, in reviewing all the bills in consideration, it is my opinion that the Dianda bill has the most reasonable, equitable, and effective language in support of our disabled veterans.

The veterans of the state of Michigan, as you may know, have historically been utilizing their benefits less often than most other states. I and my colleagues have worked tirelessly trying to get the word out to our community of veterans to make them aware that they are entitled to benefits for having served their country. In addition, Michigan is one of the few remaining states in the Midwest to pass legislation that will offer tax relief for its seriously disabled veterans. It is imperative that we work to ensure that our veterans are obtaining their earned benefits and that we do all we can to reward them for their sacrifices made on our behalf.

As a service officer I meet with veterans daily on the job and can assure you that many of our disabled veterans struggle to meet their financial obligations. Tax relief would help these individuals and their families immensely. It would also keep these saved dollars in the communities in which they live.

Disabled veterans face many insurmountable challenges everyday of their lives. They are unable to secure gainful employment, they are unable to meet the needs of their families, and they are burdened with financial difficulties and emotional challenges that make daily living a task that is harder than anyone should have to face for having become disabled while serving their country proudly.

Representative Dianda's bill is exceptional in that it also includes those veterans who have been determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be unemployable due to their disabilities. This group of veterans should not be forgotten when considering a bill for tax relief. For this reason Dianda's bill makes the most sense and is the most impartial and equitable of the three bills being considered.

I hope you will give serious thought and consideration to the Bill #4698 authored by Scott Dianda and will find it to be a just reward for those men and women who have paid a very large and lifelong price for serving their country.

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